Freedom of Information Request FOI 26 111

Various information in relation to finances linked to proposed station closures (particular focus of Charmouth)

Query and response:

Following my review I am making this request, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, for the following additional financial information:

1) *Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025.*

These extend to some 141 pages but at the end of the day only include some very limited basic figures of expenditure, just repeated and explained in numerous different ways, which I am sure are way beyond and totally confusing for normal members of the public.

The additional information I wish to request regarding the expenditure is as follows:

1. *Employees £50.490m, broken down into the following subheadings, Senior Management as per the required declaration on page 74 which appears to total £1.1994 m; Other management and administration at Head offices; management and administration at Fire Stations and finally the actual front line Fire crews allocated separately between full time and on call stations.*

   We have considered this portion of your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Unfortunately, we are unable to comply with this part of your request as it exceeds the appropriate cost limit set out within Section 12 of the Act.

   Under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004, public authorities are not required to comply with a request if the cost of doing so would exceed £450, calculated at a rate of £25 per hour. This equates to 18 hours of work.

   We estimate that complying with your request would exceed this limit. Here is a breakdown of our estimate:

   In order to extract this information in the format that you have requested, we would need to interrogate the data on an individual basis for each employee, due to the number of post moves and promotions (both temporary and substantive), particularly in relation to uniformed staff. For 2024/25 we have 1279 records that would need investigating. We estimate that it would take at least 5 minutes per record to collate the data. This would total over 106 hours (1279 records x 5 minutes = 6,395 minutes or 106.6 hours).

   Based on our assessment, the total time required would exceed the statutory time limit.

Under our duty to provide advice and assistance (Section 16 of the Act), we are pleased to provide you with the requested information split by our standard staff group categories, as opposed to the specific groups you have requested above. These categories reflect the standard way in which we analyse staffing costs across the structures within the organisation, which are vastly different for many reasons. From your review of our accounts, you have already identified the costs of senior management. There is no further information to disclose on this.

Please see the tab named "1.1 Employees 2024-25" within the "FOI 26 111 – financial information linked to proposed station closures" spreadsheet for this information.

2. *Premises, £4.290m, broken down between, Management Offices at Salisbury and Dorchester and anywhere else; Full time fire stations; On call fire stations; Training facilities away from Stations; and any other premises.*

Please see the tab named "1.2 Premises 2024-25" within the "FOI 26 111 – financial information linked to proposed station closures" spreadsheet for this information.

3. *Transport £1.455m, broken down between non frontline vehicles, vehicles at full time stations and vehicles at on call stations, showing separate figures for fuel used, maintenance and any other category of expenditure included.*

Please see the tab named "1.3 Transport 2024-25" within the "FOI 26 111 – financial information linked to proposed station closures" spreadsheet for this information.

4. *Supplies and Services £5.398m, an approximate list of what items are included under this heading and a financial breakdown showing anything used other than at actual fire stations if applicable, and then, if possible, split between full time and on call stations.*

Please see the tab named "1.4 Supplies & Services 2024-25" within the "FOI 26 111 – financial information linked to proposed station closures" spreadsheet for this information.

5. *Agency and Contracted Out Services £1.508m, an approximate list of what items are included under this heading and a financial breakdown showing anything used other than at actual fire stations if applicable, and then, if possible, split between full time and on call stations.*

Please see the tab named "1.5 Agency & Contracted Out" within the "FOI 26 111 – financial information linked to proposed station closures" spreadsheet for this information.

6. *Capital Financing and Leasing £4.754m, which has increased by 17% compared to the previous year, allocated between the main different items included divided between no frontline activities, full time stations and On call stations*

Please see the tab named “1.6 Capital Financing & Leasing” within the “FOI 26 111 – financial information linked to proposed station closures” spreadsheet for this information.

7. *Credit for income received £4.753m which shows a significant reduction of £1.627m i.e. 25% compared to the previous year. Is this fire station services provided and recharged to the general public or businesses of if not just that what does it include. Also, what is the reason for the reduction, in particular has there been any change in the policy for recharging services if that is what it relates to. I would just mention that this shortfall alone is equivalent to the projected shortfalls for the next few years on which the proposal to close stations is based, although may be a red herring.*

Please see the tab named “1.7 Income” within the “FOI 26 111 – financial information linked to proposed station closures” spreadsheet for this information.

2) *Financial information for the proposed closing stations in particular the specific figures for the Charmouth Station*

1. *In the main review report on page 3 there is a list of what is described as the 'possible and estimated annual revenue savings' of each of the 8 stations, if all these stations were approved for closure. Then there are, what appears to be the same figures, included in the individual station summaries on pages 17-22, under a heading 'Financial Savings' which include in addition 'Annual Capital Savings', 'One-off redundancy Costs' and 'Latest Station Valuation.*

   Can you please confirm what actual/projected period these figures shown for Revenue savings relate to and how they compare to the calculated full historical or projected running costs for each of the stations

   Please see attached spreadsheet “FOI 26 111 – supporting data for Charmouth Fire station” for this information. This was originally shared with you by our Director of Financial Services, Ryan Maslen, on 23 April 2026 however it has been attached again here for completeness.

2. *With regard to the figures just for Charmouth in the separate Appendix 4, which I am of course specifically interested in, could you please provide the following financial information:*

   The annual revenue saving is shown as £204,216 and you have provided on page 7 a list of what is described as the annual revenue costs incurred for each of the years 2020/21 to 2024/25, which have gradually increased, which indicates the saving is perhaps a projection for 2025/6 or possible 2026/7, could you please confirm which.

   Please see attached spreadsheet “FOI 26 111 – supporting data for Charmouth Fire station” for this information.

Above the list of earlier years, it states what is included in the totals. Could you please provide a breakdown of the total cost of £196,539 for the year 2024/5 and the above projected saving of £204,216 between the following: Cost of station personnel; Premises costs; vehicle expenses, standard maintenance, cleaning and laundry costs; and anything else which is significant which is included.

Please see the tab named "2.2.ii&iii 2024-25 costs" within the "FOI 26 111 – financial information linked to proposed station closures" spreadsheet for this information.

with regard to the figures for cost of personnel, could you please provide a split of the annual costs between: 1, the total basic gross pay for the retainer and training time 2, the total gross pay for callouts in addition to this, and 3, the amount of employers NIC paid.

Please see the tab named "2.2.ii&iii 2024-25 costs" within the "FOI 26 111 – financial information linked to proposed station closures" spreadsheet for this information.

One other item of interest is the treatment of employers NIC contributions which up until 2024-25 would not have been particularly significant for the part time on call employees, but as of now this will have become a significant additional cost with the reduction of the lower limit to just £5,000 , which is presumably around the cost of the retainer and training time, so that all payments relating to call outs will now incur the extra cost of 15% on top.

The threshold where NI becomes payable dropped from £9,100 to £5,000 in the 2025/26 tax year. The % rate payable increased from 13.8% to 15%, it is not an extra cost of 15%. NI contributions costs for Charmouth Fire Station increased from £5,070.76 in 2024/25 to £11,171.94 in 2025/26.

To compare the proportion of total costs which will actually be saved could you please provide details of the total overall actual costs for running Charmouth Station for 2024/5, and projected costs for 2025/6 and 2026/7.

Please see the tabs named "2.2.ii&iii 2024-25 costs" and "2.2.v 2025-26 & 2026-27 costs" within the "FOI 26 111 – financial information linked to proposed station closures" spreadsheet for this information. 2026/27 budget monitoring work within the Service has not yet started, so this information is not held.

Finally with regard to the redundancy costs, can you please confirm that these have been calculated on the basis that all personnel at Charmouth will be made redundant and leave the Service and not be transferred to adjoining stations if that were possible, or take up full time positions with the Fire Service elsewhere

Redundancy costs have been calculated on the basis that all personnel at Charmouth will be made redundant and leave the Service.

Information accurate on the date provided: 2 June 2026