| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 23-0114  Responded to: xx February 2023 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## Please provide copies of all Police Scotland correspondence and documentation with Aberdeen Football Club relating to the Red Shed (also known as the Merkland Stand) since January 1, 2020 to today’s date.

## Please also provide copies of any correspondence between Police Scotland and Aberdeen City Council relating to the Red Shed between the same dates.

Given the scope of your request relates to all correspondence and documentation held relating to the ‘Red Shed’ I regret to inform you that I am unable to provide you with the information you have requested, as it would prove too costly to do so within the context of the fee regulations.

As you may be aware the current cost threshold is £600 and I estimate that it would cost well in excess of this amount to process your request.

As such, and in terms of Section 16(4) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 where Section 12(1) of the Act (Excessive Cost of Compliance) has been applied, this represents a refusal notice for the information sought.

By way of explanation, we have previously attempted to conduct similar keyword searches to the one that would be required here and it is important to note that the term ‘red shed’ or ‘Merkland’ could be used as a term of reference within an enquiry or investigation file. In this case a search for any email or record containing the phrase ‘red shed’ or ‘Merkland’ along with the names of the individuals involved would be required. Moreover this would only focus on email correspondence as there is no central filing system which would allow me to identify paper correspondence or notebook entries without an appropriate reference number.

Despite previous and extensive efforts to retrieve emails requested by keyword it has become clear that whilst we do have the facility to conduct a keyword search, we do not have the facility to limit this to a particular date range. This means that any mention of the keywords on any date would be returned. These are returned as individual full mailbox archive files for each mailbox that contains these keywords.

Once these archives are retrieved, a manual process is required to confirm which emails within each file contain the keyword required, which date it was sent or received on and finally if it was between Police Scotland and Aberdeen City Council or Aberdeen Football Club. This is further complicated by the fact that we will simply know there is at least one email within the mailbox archive that contains the keyword. There could be 1 or 100 and so each email within the archive would need to be manually checked.

Similar keyword requests have been conducted in A Division which accounts for slightly over 1,300 mailboxes. Using a very conservative estimate of 30 minutes to check each mailbox file concerned, this would very quickly exceed the cost limitations of the Act. Police Scotland have assessed that the £600 cost limit within the Act equates to 40 hours of work and accordingly your request would breach the cost threshold.

In order to be of assistance, I can advise you that the various local authorities across Scotland are responsible for the granting and monitoring of stadium safety certificates and the Police and other agencies will form partnerships as part of their Safety Advisory Group. As the responsible body the council will write up and circulate any relevant documentation as appropriate to the relevant partners.

I can confirm that it is likely that Police Scotland will have been copied into some correspondence which may, in part, discuss the subject matter of the ‘Red Shed’. If so, this will have been circulated in the form of post-match inspection reports and other associated documentation which reports on the whole stadium and provides an operational review. For clarity these documents are created and owned by the Local Authority which in this particular case is Aberdeen City Council.

You may be able to request associated information directly from Aberdeen City Council for advice on this matter via the link below:

[Make a Freedom of Information request | Aberdeen City Council](https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/access-information/make-freedom-information-request)

If you require any further assistance please contact us quoting the reference above.

You can request a review of this response within the next 40 working days by [email](mailto:foi@scotland.police.uk) or by letter (Information Management - FOI, Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH). Requests must include the reason for your dissatisfaction.

If you remain dissatisfied following our review response, you can appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) within 6 months - [online](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal), by [email](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info) or by letter (OSIC, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, KY16 9DS).

Following an OSIC appeal, you can appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

This response will be added to our [Disclosure Log](http://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log) in seven days' time.

Every effort has been taken to ensure our response is as accessible as possible. If you require this response to be provided in an alternative format, please let us know.