

## Request

I would like to request full accounts and information regarding your decision to demolish the galleries

## Response

The Galleries development is a measure affecting, or likely to affect, the elements of the environment. There, the right of access to this information should therefore be considered under the Environmental Information Request (EIR), rather than under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI).

The request for full accounts is dealt with as follows:

Exception Regulation 12 (5) (f): disclosure would adversely affect the interests of the person or organisation who provided the information, is applicable here.

The information referred to is commercially sensitive, as it would be advantageous to competitors if disclosed and cause harm to the commercial interests of the Council and the Council's development partner. Therefore, neither Cityheart nor the Council have consented for the information to be disclosed.

Some weight must always be given to the general principle of achieving accountability and transparency through the disclosure of information held by it. However, the Council asserts that disclosure of the withheld information would weaken its commercial position and lead to its inability to achieve the best value from the organisations it is working with.

Weighing the need for transparency and accountability against the requirement for the Council to secure the most advantageous outcome for this project, the Council has decided that the greater weight must be given to those factors which favour the withholding of the information requested.

In terms of what you describe as the "decision to demolish the Galleries", the Council appointed a Strategic Development Partner in accordance with the Competitive Dialogue Procedure (Regulation 30) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The decision to appoint the successful bidder was taken by Cabinet on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Please see: [Decision - Wigan Town Centre Regeneration](#)

The Galleries redevelopment proposal does not entail wholesale demolition, there are elements which are being retained, these include:

- Makinson Arcade
- Marketgate, and
- Woodcock Square, which will be retained and enlarged so it can be used for events.

Planning Permission for the redevelopment of the site, including demolition works, was granted on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021. The Planning Committee report and minutes can be found at the following link:

[Agenda for Planning Committee on Tuesday, 2nd November, 2021, 2.00 pm \(wigan.gov.uk\)](#)