



REQUEST 19138

I would like to know the full details on the agreement between Wigan Council and the new Market Operator Northern Lights Group.

Please include:

1. Contract details
2. Value of the contract agreed
3. Length of contract agreed
4. Details of how this company will operate the market
5. The conditions on which Northern Lights Group have agreed to this partnership
6. Options of contract extension
7. Who signed the contracts for both parties
8. When the contract comes into effect
9. On what grounds can the Council terminate the agreement, (please provide a full list of grounds to terminate)
10. The scope of the agreement in regards to raising revenue through rents and other means
11. What remuneration Northern Lights Group will receive if contracted goals and aims are missed
12. Penalties Northern Lights groups will incur for not achieving the contracted goals and aims
13. Bonus scheme (if there is one) for the Northern Light Group should they obtain better than expected results

RESPONSE

Request

You requested information relating to an Arrangement for Lease entered into by the Council, including disclosure of the agreement and its associated commercial and financial terms.

Information held

The Council confirms that it holds information within the scope of your request. However, for the reasons set out below, the Council has decided to withhold the requested information.

Exemption relied upon

The Council relies on section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Why section 43(2) is engaged

The requested information contains commercially sensitive, pre-contractual information forming part of an Arrangement for Lease, including conditional financial and development terms. Disclosure would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of both the Council and the counterparty in the following specific and tangible ways:

- **Undermining negotiating position in ongoing or future property transactions**
Agreed or proposed rental levels, incentives, or conditional terms within the AfL reflect a negotiated position based on site-specific and market-sensitive factors. Disclosure would weaken the Council's position in future lease negotiations on other sites by establishing a known benchmark which prospective occupiers or developers could seek to replicate or improve upon.
- **Distorting the property and development market**
Publishing detailed AfL terms could artificially influence market expectations for similar developments, reducing flexibility and competitiveness in future negotiations and making it more difficult for the Council to respond to changing market conditions.
- **Prejudicing commercial viability and financial models**
Agreements for Lease are often underpinned by sensitive viability and financial assumptions. Disclosure of these assumptions or milestone structures could allow third parties to infer construction costs, funding arrangements, or profitability, which would likely harm the commercial interests of both the Council and the developer or intended tenant.
- **Harming third-party commercial interests and relationships**
The AfL contains information provided by third parties in a commercial context and with a reasonable expectation of confidentiality. Disclosure would be likely to prejudice those third parties' commercial interests and could reduce their willingness to engage openly with the Council in future development projects.
- **Reducing ability to secure best value**
Collectively, these impacts would be likely to result in less favourable lease terms in future transactions, thereby undermining the Council's ability to secure best value for the public purse.

These consequences represent a real and significant risk of prejudice rather than a remote or speculative possibility.

Public interest test

The Council has considered the public interest in transparency against the need to protect its commercial negotiating position. On balance, the public interest favours maintaining the exemption.

Review rights

You may request an internal review within 40 working days or complain to the Information Commissioner's Office.