

<b>FOI REF:</b>	14348
<b>RESPONSE SENT:</b>	25/07/2024

**Request:**

On 9th March 2022, Winchester City Council made a decision to agree, as landowner of the River Park Leisure Centre, Gordon Road, Winchester, to enter into an agreement for lease to enable the University of Southampton to progress options for the extension of the neighbouring Winchester School of Art campus on the River Park Leisure Centre site.

Please would you provide the following:

- a) All correspondence, email and messages (Official Council emails, Personal emails and WhatsApp messages) regarding River Park, between Senior Officers, relevant Councillors and the University of Southampton since March 2022;
- b) Minutes of all meetings held since March 2022 between Winchester City Council and the University of Southampton regarding River Park;
- c) Details of any agreement with regard to River Park which has been entered into between the parties since March 2022;
- d) How much money has been spent and received each year since 2020 on the River Park Leisure Centre site since it was closed to the public, as well as the rest of River Park, in terms of maintenance of structures, insurance, business rates, receipts from events, legal advice and external consultants, with a breakdown as to the engagement of each.
- e) Details of the plans for the demolition of the Leisure Centre building, for which funds were said to be in place at a Cabinet meeting on 8th February 2024.

**Response:**

As your request is for information related to a land transaction/development, your request should properly be considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR).

The EIR give similar rights to those under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 but apply where the information requested is environmental information, the definition of which includes information about land and therefore information about the disposal/development of land/buildings.

**Part a:**

As a result of the clarification of part a of your request, the emails considered for disclosure are those involving officers at the level of Chief Executive, Strategic Director and Corporate Head of Service and councillors who are members of Cabinet. A bundle of correspondence is attached in response to your request at part a. There are some redactions which are explained in the section of this letter below headed "Exemptions/exceptions." In addition to this, a small amount of material has been redacted where it does not fall within the remit of your request.



Part b:

Two sets of minutes are attached. These related to meetings which took place on 1 September 2022 and 2 February 2023.

In relation to redaction, the same issues apply as explained in response to part a.

Part c:

No agreement has been concluded between WCC and UoS with regard to River Park. The draft is subject to contract and is likely to be considered as commercially sensitive and therefore exempt (although this is not part of your request).

Part d: See attached.

Part e: There are no current plans for demolition of the Leisure Centre building.

### **Exemptions/exceptions**

The following exemptions/exceptions have been applied in relation to a limited amount of material considered under parts a and b of your request:

#### **Personal data**

All personal details of people who are not WCC staff or councillors have been removed in order to comply with data protection legislation. All of the redacted personal data relates to UoS staff.

The personal data has been withheld on the basis of the exception under Regulation 13 of the EIR. Disclosure of the data would be a breach of the data protection principles as there is no lawful basis for their disclosure.

#### **Information that is commercially confidential**

A very small amount of information has been redacted where the contents are considered to be commercially sensitive. This information consists of correspondence relating to negotiations between WCC and UoS or other related financial or contractual issues which engage an exception in the EIR. The relevant exception is under Regulation 12(5) (e).

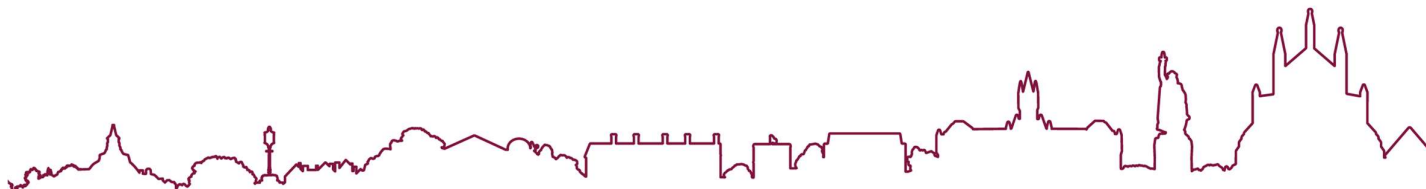
#### **Information that is not held by the Council**

The following applies in relation to parts c and e of your request.

Under the EIR, where information is not held by the public authority a refusal should be issued- the exemption at Regulation 12(4)(e) of the EIR applies.

#### **Refusal Notice**

This letter is a formal refusal notice under Regulation 14 of the EIR - in relation to some of the information requested, and for the reasons explained above. I consider that the public



interest in maintaining the exception referred to, outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

