

FOI Ref

Response sent

11225

21 Jun 2022

(CCC) Contract between the council and operators of the observation wheel on Parker's Piece

I am writing to obtain a copy of the contract between Cambridge City Council and the operators of the observation wheel on Parker's Piece, for the siting of the wheel for a five-year period.

I attended and spoke at the Planning Committee meeting yesterday on 14th June 2022. During the meeting, it was revealed that the council had such a contract. This apparent material fact was not a matter disclosed in the planning application documentation, and has not hitherto been made public, to the best of my knowledge.

The Cambridge Independent has also noted the emergence of this information about the contract:

<https://twitter.com/HannahCCopley/status/1536984265254227969>

Please provide:

1) A copy of the contract.

Note: Given that the council has separately refused in another FOI request [1] to reveal the amount received during the 2021 year, I imagine that the council may be also therefore minded to refuse release of the contract itself given that this will also include financial information. In that event, please treat my request as having consent to receiving a copy of the contract with the figure redacted, in order to remove any barrier to release of the wording. Naturally I am also happy for signature images also to be redacted.

2) A copy of / link to the minutes of the public meeting of councilors at which the making of a commercial deal with the operator of the wheel was discussed and approved, or if this was not done, confirmation as such.

3) A reference to what public consultation took place on the principle of siting a wheel on Parker's Piece (in public policy terms, e.g. commercial / open space, i.e. not in relation to the regulatory planning application process), or if this was not done, confirmation as such.

4) A copy of the minutes of any internal meeting at which officers formally agreed to pursue the making of a commercial deal with the operator of the wheel.

5) The name and position of the Councillor who authorised the signing of the contract.

6) The post title of the officer who authorised the signing of the contract.

7) The date on which the contract was signed, if not stated in the contract itself.

In the event that any of these take longer to obtain internally, e.g. for item 5, I

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would consent to the earlier staged release of other items in order not to delay those unnecessarily. I am most interested in item 1.

Response:

Thank you for your request for information above, which we have dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I hope the following will answer your query:

(CCC) Contract between the council and operators of the observation wheel on Parker's Piece

I am writing to obtain a copy of the contract between Cambridge City Council and the operators of the observation wheel on Parker's Piece, for the siting of the wheel for a five-year period.

I attended and spoke at the Planning Committee meeting yesterday on 14th June 2022. During the meeting, it was revealed that the council had such a contract. This apparent material fact was not a matter disclosed in the planning application documentation, and has not hitherto been made public, to the best of my knowledge.

The Cambridge Independent has also noted the emergence of this information about the contract:

<https://twitter.com/HannahCCopley/status/1536984265254227969>

Please provide:

1) A copy of the contract.

Please find attached a redacted copy of the Hire Agreement.

2) A copy of / link to the minutes of the public meeting of councillors....

There are no public meeting minutes relating to the Wheel agreement.

The use of Parks and Open Spaces for opportunities to generate income was approved in the Budget Setting Round in 2020/21. The item II4754 approved new business opportunities on Parks and Open Spaces, and is linked with CAP4741 (Investment Programme for public toilets).

In this budget context, the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy at the time made the decision to enter into an Agreement on the Observation Wheel, and I can confirm that she used the delegated authority to make such decisions, and this is because

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- Section 2 of the Constitution at the time set out the decisions of the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Space . This portfolio had priorities of which Open Space was one.
- In Section 9 of the Constitution this details the Scheme of delegation to Council Officers. The granting of licenses over Council's land is a delegated property matter.

In Section 9 if of the constitution, the scheme of delegation to Council Officers is detailed. The Head of Environmental Services has the management of nature reserves, commons, parks, open spaces, and amenity areas, delegated to them and this includes the granting and refusing applications for the use of those areas.

3) A reference to what public consultation took place on the principle of siting a wheel on Parker's Piece (in public policy terms, e.g. commercial / open space, i.e. not in relation to the regulatory planning application process), or if this was not done, confirmation as such.

We sought the views of Ward Councillors on the Observation Wheel on the 21st December 2020 and we set out that the Wheel would need planning permissions

4) A copy of the minutes of any internal meeting at which officers formally agreed to pursue the making of a commercial deal with the operator of the wheel.

There are no minutes where officers formally agreed to pursue the making of a commercial deal with the operator of the wheel.

5) The name and position of the Councillor who authorised the signing of the contract.

Councillor Katie Thornburrow – Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Space.

6) The post title of the officer who authorised the signing of the contract.

Head of Legal Services

7) The date on which the contract was signed, if not stated in the contract itself.

10th May 2021

In the event that any of these take longer to obtain internally, e.g. for item 5, I would consent to the earlier staged release of other items in order not to delay those unnecessarily. I am most interested in item 1.

We aim to provide a quality service to you and hope that you are satisfied with this response, however if you have any questions, please contact us.

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Further queries on this matter should be directed to foi@cambridge.gov.uk