

Ref: 10 Oct 16 Spruce Hills FoI

Date: 10 October 2016

**By email only**

Dear Mr Read

**Requests for Information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("FOIA")**

I write in response to your requests to Waltham Forest College ("the **College**") via the website [whatdotheyknow.com](http://whatdotheyknow.com) on 10 September 2016 requesting information under the FOIA, under references 357688-7a7e25c5 in an email timed at 07:47 and 357749-9c9d378a in an email timed at 23:47. This response and attachments have been sent to both of the email addresses relating to these requests.

You requested the following information in each email under the FOIA regarding the Spruce Hills land sale and proposed residential development:

1. "...communications between yourselves and Circle regarding the proposed block of flats on this site..."; and
2. "...correspondence between the college and Circle regarding the selling of the land for development..."

**Duty to Confirm or Deny**

The College has considered your requests and I can confirm that the College holds information falling under the categories that you have requested for the purposes of FOIA.

**Communication**

The College is committed to transparency in all of its dealings. We have provided all of the information requested by you and can confirm that no information is withheld pursuant to any exemptions. As the number of documents is extensive and the file sizes quite large, it is not possible to attach all of the information within a single document but I can confirm the information will follow under eleven subsequent emails clearly numbered for your ease of reference as follows:

- |                      |                                                                                  |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Emails 1 to 2 of 11  | Reports to the College Corporation and pre-marketing information                 |
| Emails 3 to 5 of 11  | Marketing and sales documentation produced by Glenny, the College's sales agents |
| Emails 6 to 11 of 11 | Email correspondence between the College and Circle Housing                      |

Having regard to our duty to advise and assist all individuals making a request under the FOIA I would set out the following as way of context:

- The College is an independent organisation responsible for its own business and financial affairs
- There is a fiduciary duty on the College Principal and College Corporation to maintain the College's solvency
- The sale of the land at Spruce Hills Road was necessary for the College to maintain its solvency and financial viability
- Disposing of surplus land and assets is common practice across further education colleges and the wider public sector and has been for many years
- The process followed by the College to secure best value i.e. the pre – planning application letter followed by an independently managed, open and public tender is standard and proper practice
- The College itself is not developing the site
- It is the responsibility of the planning authority to approve or otherwise any specific proposals for the site in light of national and local planning guidance, and to protect the interests of local residents through the formal planning process

The open, competitive tender process and the submission of various bids for the site were managed by a marketing agent: Glenny LLP. As you will see from the information provided, the College received a total of nine bids for the site and the rationale for accepting Circle's proposal was that it was ultimately the highest value bidder for the site.

Throughout the process the College acted in accordance with applicable legislation.

### **Complaints Procedure**

If you are in any way unhappy with this response to your request, you may ask for an internal review by the College. Please write to Ms Veronica Clarke, PA to the Principal & Chief Executive at [veronica.clarke@waltham.ac.uk](mailto:veronica.clarke@waltham.ac.uk) setting out the reasons why you believe our institution has not complied with its requirements under the FOIA with regard to these requests.

If you are then not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to write directly to the ICO for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely



Peter Doble  
Director of Finance  
Waltham Forest College