



Haigh Hall Curatorial Role & Community Wealth Building

I am submitting this Freedom of Information request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding the appointment of Dr Jacqueline Riding in a curatorial role for Haigh Hall, as referenced in recent Wigan Council communications.

Given Wigan Council's stated commitment to Community Wealth Building, I request full transparency on how this appointment aligns with that policy, particularly in light of:

- The removal of locally based creative directors AI and AI, who had successfully developed the cultural master plan that secured £20 million in Levelling Up funding.
- The council's decision to appoint an external curator rather than recruiting from within Wigan Borough

1. Recruitment Process

- Was this position publicly advertised? If so, please provide:
- The date and location(s) where the job listing was posted.
- A copy of the job advertisement as it was published.

If the position was not advertised, please provide:

- The rationale for this decision.
- Any internal documents or meeting minutes discussing this appointment process.

The position of Curatorial Consultant wasn't publicly advertised because this is a temporary, short-term position that was sub-contracted via the Project Management consultants, Atkins Realis.

The value of the contract is also under our threshold value to publicly tender for the work.

Atkins Realis procured to the position quickly to support with the RIBA2 design stage for the interiors of the hall in relation to gallery spaces and to support with future exhibition plans.

The individual that was appointed to this temporary, short-term contract was chosen based on their very significant relevant experience and excellent knowledge in this specialist area.

There are no internal meeting minutes discussing this appointment process. As Atkins Realis made the appointment.

2. Justification in Relation to Community Wealth Building Given Wigan Council's stated commitment to Community Wealth Building, why has an external appointment been made when the council previously had locally based creative directors (AI and AI) leading the cultural vision for Haigh Hall?

- Was any effort made to recruit from within Wigan Borough?
- What assessment was made regarding the impact of this decision on local employment and cultural expertise?

3. Salary and Contract Terms

- What is the salary and benefits package associated with this role?
- What is the day rate of pay? • What is the length and type of contract (e.g., fixed-term, permanent, freelance, or consultancy)?
- Was this position externally funded (e.g., by the Arts Council or Levelling Up Fund)?
- What expenses (including travel, accommodation, subsistence, or any other costs) have been claimed or are expected to be claimed in relation to this appointment?

Please note: Refusal to disclose salary, payment details, or expenses will not be acceptable, as Wigan Council has previously publicly released financial details related to AI and AI's payment. There must be equal transparency in financial disclosures for all publicly funded roles related to Haigh Hall.

4. Selection Process

- How many applicants were considered for this position?
- What was the selection process (e.g., number of interview stages, criteria used)?
- Who were the decision-makers in the appointment process? Given the significant public funding allocated to Haigh Hall's redevelopment and Wigan Council's stated commitment to Community Wealth Building, transparency in key appointments is essential.

Due to the need to recruit to this time limited position quickly, to support with a specific design stage and not delay the project, adding further costs, a decision was made based on skills and experience and not the geographical location of the Curatorial Consultant.

The contract exists between Atkins Realis and the Curatorial Consultant, not with Wigan Council, therefore it is third party information.

Additionally, the Council believes that it is commercial information and should not be disclosed under s43 of Freedom of Information Act 2000 as it describes charging rates of third parties which may also constitute personal data of the engaged consultant. The Council has considered the public interest in the transparency to the public of council spend but have also considered that this is a contract between third parties, disclosure of hourly rates which may inform and influence competitors. The Council has concluded that, on balance, the information should not be disclosed.

Atkins Realis considered five possible candidates for this role.

The selection process involved an evaluation of skills and experience relevant to the role.

Atkins Realis recommended a candidate to appoint based on their evaluation of all candidates skills and experience relevant to the role.