

12 December 2025

██████████
C/- ██████████
Sent via email to ██████████

Request for Official Information LG25-0339 – Cougar Security

Dear ██████████,

Thank you for your request for information held by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC). On 3 December 2025 you requested the following information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA):

- 1. Please supply details of all payments by QLDC to Cougar Security Ltd and Cougar Group Ltd (plus any affiliated companies - referred to collectively in this request as "Cougar") since contracts were first entered into between the two parties.**
- 2. Please detail the procurement processes used to originate all QLDC contracts with Cougar.**
- 3. Were all of these procurement processes competitive bids via GETS - if not, why not? Please supply copies of relevant RFP's etc used for procurement.**
- 4. Please identify all contracts between Cougar and QLDC.**
- 5. Please detail all measures used to monitor performance and compliance with these contracts and how the contracts are renewed or terminated.**
- 6. Please detail all measures taken by QLDC to ensure that Cougar staff are suitably experienced and qualified to undertake the contracted work.**
- 7. Do the contracts use fixed fees for services or are they based on a commission or quota system? How are the fixed fees calculated and updated?**
- 8. Who is the QLDC manager responsible for Cougar's contracts and performance?**
- 9. Please supply all communications (including email but not limited to email) between that manager and Cougar over the past six months regarding any performance, contract renewal, compliance, and cost issues.**

QLDC RESPONSE

In response to your request, we consulted with the QLDC Procurement Team.

Partial release of information

- 6. Please detail all measures taken by QLDC to ensure that Cougar staff are suitably experienced and qualified to undertake the contracted work.**

Cougar is prequalified through SiteWise, a third-party, not-for-profit provider that engages health and safety professionals to review contractors' safety systems, including staff training, prior to QLDC engaging them. SiteWise operates under SiteSafe, a national training provider.

There is no cost to QLDC for using the SiteWise system; contractors pay membership fees depending on their position in the supply chain (e.g., subcontractor or main contractor).

Cougar currently holds a SiteWise score of 100% and is classified as a Gold Standard contractor.

In addition, under QLDC's Health and Safety Contractor Management System (HSCMS), the QLDC project manager responsible for engaging Cougar must verify that Cougar staff hold the appropriate training, licences, and competencies for the work being assigned.

Please note that the remainder of this response will be provided once we have collated the required information from the relevant teams.

7. Do the contracts use fixed fees for services or are they based on a commission or quota system?

Facilities and Fleet:

The contracts operate on fixed annual fees that are agreed at the outset. There is no provision for cost escalation within the contract term; any increases in costs arise solely from an expanded scope of work.

Please note that the remainder of this response will be provided once we have collated the required information from the relevant teams.

8. Who is the QLDC manager responsible for Cougar's contracts and performance?

Management of the Cougar contracts is shared across several areas, as these contracts sit within different Directorates and Business Units. QLDC's contract management is decentralised, with key contracts held across Regulatory, Property, Infrastructure, and People and Capability. Accordingly, responsibility for overseeing Cougar's contracts and performance rests with the relevant directors and/or managers within each of these areas.

Consultation with requester

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Your request as currently framed will be very difficult to meet without substantial collation or research. It involves a considerable amount of information, and responding in its present form would place a considerable strain on our operations.

We have considered whether charging a fee or extending the response timeframe, as required under section 17(f) of the LGOIMA, would assist in meeting your request. However, we have determined that neither charging nor extending the timeframe would help in this situation. Extending the timeframe would not alleviate the operational challenges we face, and charging would not address the underlying issue of resource constraints in processing such a large volume of information. Therefore, neither charging nor an extension would effectively resolve the issue.

Unless your request is amended, we may have to refuse it under section 17(f) of the LGOIMA, which applies where the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

Please inform us before **17 December 2025** by return email whether you are prepared to amend or clarify your request and, if so, how. You may consider:

- Date range: Further limiting the information to materials created or received between [insert specific start date] and [insert end date].
- Focus areas: Identifying areas essential to meeting the needs of the information requested e.g., current contracts, general contract management practices, etc.

If the above considerations are acceptable to you, it may enable us to deliver a meaningful and accurate response within a reasonable timeframe.

Please note that because this consultation has been issued within seven working days of the date your request was received, any amendment or refinement you choose to make to your request will be considered a new request under section 13(7) of the LGOIMA. As a result, a new 20-working-day statutory timeframe for Council's response will apply from the date your amended request is received.

Decision to withhold information

7. How are the fixed fees calculated and updated?

We have good reason under section 7(2)(b)(ii) of the LGOIMA for withholding the requested information. We consider it is necessary to withhold this information on the basis of the following grounds:

- Section 7(2)(b) - the withholding of the information is necessary to protect information where the making available of the information—
 - (ii) would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information.

Section 7(2)(b)(ii) is intended to safeguard commercially sensitive information where release could disadvantage the parties involved. This provision recognises the importance of protecting confidential

commercial arrangements, including pricing structures, fee methodologies, and contractual frameworks that form part of a competitive operating environment.

In this case, the information you have requested forms part of confidential commercial agreements between Council and the service provider. Following consultation and careful consideration, we do not consider that the public interest in disclosure outweighs the need to withhold this information.

Public interest considerations

In assessing whether to withhold information, QLDC carefully evaluates the public interest—particularly whether disclosure would enhance transparency, accountability, or informed public engagement. This assessment includes weighing those benefits against the potential harm that could result from releasing the information.

QLDC recognises the public interest in promoting transparency and accountability of local authority members and officials, as well as the broader interest in good governance. We are committed to releasing information wherever possible. However, in this instance, QLDC considers that the need to protect the commercial position of the party concerned outweighs the public interest in disclosure. Release of the information could unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of the party concerned.

Therefore, QLDC has determined that section 7(2)(b)(ii) of the LGOIMA applies. This provision allows for the withholding of information to protect the commercial position of the party concerned. In this case, no overriding public interest has been identified that would justify its release.

Right to review the above decision

Note that you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about this process is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please contact Naell.Crosby-Roe@qldc.govt.nz (Director Democracy Services).

We trust that the above information satisfactorily answers your request.

Kind regards,

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Democracy Services Team
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