

Casino bosses lose legal battle to stop The Post publishing

An American gaming corporation has failed in a High Court attempt to prevent The Birmingham Post from publishing financial information and contractual details of a super-casino at the new Birmingham City stadium.

Las Vegas Sands sought a judicial review against a decision by Birmingham City Council to release confidential documents about the proposed casino under the Freedom of Information Act.

The application for judicial review was refused by the High Court on March 2.

The court was asked to intervene after the council, responding to a request by The Post, decided that the public had the right to see details of an exclusivity agreement which binds Las Vegas Sands, the football club and the council to work together until 2009 to secure a super-casino at the Wheels site in Saltley.

Las Vegas Sands' legal challenge is believed to be the first attempt by a private company to prevent a local authority from releasing documents under the Freedom of Information Act.

Birmingham City Council initially decided to hand over only a censored version of the exclusivity agreement, but reversed its decision following an appeal by The Birmingham Post.

The council said that public interest arguments were in favour of disclosure.

Las Vegas Sands has up to a month to consider referring the High Court decision to the Court of Appeal or, ultimately, to

the House of Lords.

A council spokesman said the exclusivity agreement would be released if Las Vegas Sands did not invoke the appeals process.