

20 May 2021



Tēnā koe

Request for Information – Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987

We refer to your official information request dated 12 May 2021:

Can I please be provided with the minutes from all the Councillor Led Climate Change Working Group meetings.

No formal minutes were taken at the Councillor-led working group meetings. These were informal meetings with no democratic services staff present to take minutes. We are therefore declining this request under section 17(e) of the LGOIMA, as the information does not exist.

However, I note that Councillor Josh Briggs provided you with an overview of the Working Group's activities, in an email on 26 January 2021 at 19:49, attached for your reference.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) may be published on the Council's website.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jörn Scherzer".

Jörn Scherzer
Head of Climate & Solid Waste

From: [Josh Briggs](#)
To: [Jörn Scherzer](#)
Subject: Fw: Climate Change Working Group Record of Activity
Date: Monday, 17 May 2021 2:23:15 PM

FYI

From: Josh Briggs <Josh.Briggs@huttcity.govt.nz>
Sent: 26 January 2021 19:49
To: Matthew Young <mattyjyoung@gmail.com>
Cc: Andy Mitchell <Andy.Mitchell@huttcity.govt.nz>; Simon Edwards <Simon.Edwards@huttcity.govt.nz>; Shazly Rasheed <Shazly.Rasheed@huttcity.govt.nz>; Jörn Scherzer <Joern.Scherzer@huttcity.govt.nz>; Helen Oram <Helen.Oram@huttcity.govt.nz>; Campbell Barry <Campbell.Barry@huttcity.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Climate Change Working Group Record of Activity

Kia ora [REDACTED]

Happy New years, I hope this email finds you well. I have just returned to work and have started clearing emails, sorry for the delay in my response.

For your information, the working group met once each Council meeting cycle via video conference. The meetings were well attended by members and relevant Council officers.

The feedback from Councillors and Council officers involved in the working group has been that it was very useful to have regular dialogue and to feed into and develop work within Council. Part of the reason we now have a Climate Change and Sustainability Committee is because of the success and the now known limitations of the working group. We would likely not have got to this point without the working group existing.

Since the successful resolution to establish the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee and disband the working group I have had requests that we find some way to retain a similar conversational space. Which to me demonstrates the inherent value of making time for dialogue.

A lot of time and energy was put into the establishment of the working group because all involved had the expectations that it would be active for a long time, likely the rest of the triennium if not carried over after the next election. That work has not been wasted as it has helped lay a foundation for the new standing committee and the collective work ahead of us.

That being said here is a list of things that the climate change working group had a role in during it's relatively short time:

Fostered interest and traction with all elected members to be able to establish the new Climate Change and Sustainability Committee.

Shared information and understanding around the subject matter, both between Councillors and Council officers.

Tested ideas, which are all now in progress due to the working group's input and support including the following:

- EV charger business case
- Creating a fund from forestry carbon credits to be used for climate change projects
- Ensuring that finance for climate change and sustainability to be visibly separated out in the LTP
- Improving the information, narrative and story-telling on our website
- Ensuring we use all appropriate opportunities for public communications •
- Decarbonisation of the pools
- Decarbonisation of the Dowse
- UPL Statement of Intent

One of the key roles of the climate change working group was to become champions for climate in all Council business. I have noticed all members step up and ask questions, make comment and advocate for better climate outcomes during committee meetings, full Council meetings and during our planning and strategy day. This to me is a huge step forward and something I am proud to see happen. This may not seem like a big thing, but to me it is a significant shift from where we were before the establishment of the working group and something that was well overdue.

Also, once we established the working group I was contacted by many residents who wanted to engage with me and Council about Climate Change. I know that other members also had residents get in touch too. The working group was not a public group however it did generate conversation with some members of the community which was great and made it clear for residents who they could approach to talk about Climate Change within the elected members, especially for people who did not already have an established relationship with Councillors.

As I have told you before, I would prefer that climate change is not used as a political football at the Council table, but something that all of us all work together on to get long lasting shift in the right direction so we have better outcomes for us all and future generations. For me, the working group has been a successful step in that direction.

I hope this information has been helpful in answering your questions.

Nga mihi nui,
Josh

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 3:14 PM
To: Josh Briggs
Cc: Andy Mitchell; Simon Edwards; Shazly Rasheed
Subject: Re: Climate Change Working Group Record of Activity

Kia ora Josh,

Could you please let me know whether you intend on replying to this and if so when I might reasonably expect a response.

Thanks,
[REDACTED]

On Mon, 7 Dec 2020, 11:15 PM [REDACTED] wrote:
Tēnā koe Josh,

Today marks just over 7 months since Hutt City Council's Community and Environment Committee voted to establish a Councillor-led Climate Change Working Group which of course you have chaired. Today is also the day before this same working group looks set to be disbanded.

Shortly after the working group was formed we discussed the merits or otherwise of the approach and I have spent the intervening time advocating as I can for Hutt City Council to take the Climate Emergency seriously.

Reading back through Council agendas there appears to have been just a single substantive publicly reported update of the working group's activities in the 7 months since it was formed.

Given this context I would appreciate it if you could provide me with a full record of the working group's activities and achievements. It would be helpful if in doing so you could provide the dates that meetings of the working group were held as well as who was present and what was covered at the respective meetings. Please also share any work that

happened outside formal meetings of the group.

I trust you understand the importance of this matter to all of us and more specifically to me personally and therefore see the value in allowing this work to be transparent.

Regards,

