



29 January 2024

Stefan Speller



Dear Stefan

Request for Information – Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (the Act) 1987

We refer to your official information request dated 10 December 2023 for information on several topics. Our responses are set out in answer to each question below:

Topic A – Ombudsman's report 'Open for Business' dated October 2023

- 1) what steps has your territorial authority taken in regard to the Ombudsman's report?*
- 2) what actions/motions have been passed by your territorial authority in response to the Ombudsman's report?*
- 3) what steps are still under consideration?*
- 4) what has or will the total cost been of any changes?*

The Hutt City Council's (the Council) response is attached as 'Letter to the Chief Ombudsman.' The report referred to in this letter can be found here: [Agenda of Audit and Risk Subcommittee – Tuesday, 28 November 2023 \(huttcity.govt.nz\)](https://www.huttcity.govt.nz/agenda-of-audit-and-risk-subcommittee-tuesday-28-november-2023).

Topic B – costs relating to councillors interactions

- 1) *How much has your territorial authority budgeted in each of the last 3 years for any costs related to councillor conduct. This could include individual conduct or between other councillors, mayor/chair or Chief Executive. This may include mediation, legal fees, legal investigations and similar.*

The Council has not set any budget for costs related to councillor conduct over the last three financial years.

- 2) *How much has your territorial authority spent in each of the last 3 financial years for any costs related to councillor conduct. This could include individual conduct or between other councillors, mayor/chair or Chief Executive. This may include mediation, legal fees, legal investigations and similar.*

In the 2020/21 financial year Council incurred external legal costs of \$27,500 excluding GST.

Topic C - staffing numbers

- 1) *What is the full FTE staff number if your territorial authority was fully staffed?*

We refer you to our [Annual Reports | Hutt City Council](#) for actual headcount and FTE numbers, although please note that these reported numbers do not include vacancies.

- 2) *What is your current FTE staff number employed?*

As of January 2024, 542 Permanent and Fixed Term FTEs are employed by the Council. Please note, this figure is exclusive of casual hours worked as casual hours are only included in headcount and FTE staff numbers for annual report purposes, due to the methodology applied which is based on hours across the full financial year.

- 3) *What percentage of full FTE staff required is currently vacant?*

As we are not able to provide a singular figure that states full FTE, we are unable to give a percentage of vacant roles. As of January 2024, there are 54 vacant roles. Please note that some of these roles may be part-time, or filled by employees on this basis, therefore we cannot provide this as an FTE number.

- 4) *What percentage of the vacant positions are not being actively recruited to fill. Eg what percentage are currently remaining vacant?*

Of the 54 vacant positions, approximately 10 roles (18.5%) are not currently being actively recruited to.

- 5) *What effect will these vacancies have on the services your territorial authority delivers / can deliver?*

To manage the impact of holding these vacancies, we're focused on ensuring delivery of those services that are a top priority for our community.

Topic D - senior leadership

- 1) *Has your Chief Executive resigned, or a new CE been appointed in the last 3 years?*

No.

- 2) *How many of your Tier Two leaders resigned, or a new leader been appointed in the last 3 years?*

Three tier two leaders have resigned over the last 3 years.

- 3) *Have your territorial authority had a staff restructure implemented, considered by senior leadership or consulted in in the last 3 years. This includes a restructure of the whole territorial authority, or one or more department.*

Yes.

Topic E - contractors

- 1) *How much was budgeted by your territorial authority in each of the last 3 years for external contractors?*

This part of your request is refused under section 17(e) of the Act, the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

- 2) *How much was the budgeted amount as a percentage of total income for each of the last three years?*

This part of your request is refused under section 17(e) of the Act, the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

3) How much was spent by your territorial authority in each of the last 3 years for external contractors?

This part of your request is refused under section 17(e) of the Act, the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

4) How much was the amount spent on contractors as a percentage of total income for each of the last three years?

This part of your request is refused under section 17(e) of the Act, the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

5) Is your territorial authority's spend on contractors expected to increase this year because of staffing shortages.

While we expect some areas will continue to require short-term support from contractors, due to financial constraints we are working to reduce contractor engagement overall.

6) Could the services contracted for be hired directly under the territorial authority?

This is not always possible as sometimes specialist skillsets are only required on a short-term basis and for various reasons which may include difficulty recruiting directly.

7) What were the three companies, receiving the highest contractors spend in the last year?

This part of your request is refused under section 17(e) of the Act, the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

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 response to your information request may be published on Hutt City Council's website. Please refer to the following link:

www.huttcity.govt.nz/council/contactus/make-an-official-information-act-request/proactive-releases

Yours sincerely

Philip Rossiter

Senior Advisor, Official Information and Privacy