



31 May 2024

Sinead Gill, Reporter, The Press

sinead.gill@stuff.co.nz

Dear Sinead Gill

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

We refer to your request of 28 May 2024. We will answer each of your questions in turn.

When organising catering, the organiser follows Council's Sensitive Expenditure guidelines, which encourage sensible spending that is fair, reasonable, and can withstand public scrutiny.

1. How much has your council budgeted for refreshments/food for elected members during your public hearings into your 2024-34 long term plan?

Response: *The Mayor and some Councillors personally contribute to a catering budget that covers their catering costs at no expense to ratepayers. The rest of the Councillors provided their food.*

2. If your council also feeds staff members meals during this time, how many staff members approximately?

Response: *in line with Council's Sensitive Expenditure guidelines, catering was provided for six officers on 15 May 2024, as the public hearings lasted longer than three hours, and it was deemed inappropriate for officers to leave for their food. Additionally, catering was provided for seven officers on 16 May 2024.*

3. A copy of the menu/list of what food will be/has been provided and on which day.



Response: *in line with Council's Sensitive Expenditure guidelines, light refreshments were provided for afternoon tea on both days. The refreshments comprised a variety of fruit, biscuits, crackers, and cheese purchased from a supermarket. On Wednesday, 15 May 2024, the officers received a lunch bag containing a sandwich or bagel, a salad, and a slice purchased from a local external food services supplier. On Thursday, 16 May 2024, the officers were served a pita chicken sandwich from a local external food services supplier."*

4. An explanation of how kai choices were made (e.g. if health was taken into consideration and if councillors had a say in what made it onto the menu) and if the company preparing the food is owned by people who live in your district or city.

Response: *in line with Council's Sensitive Expenditure guidelines, when ordering catering, organisers request minimal, reusable, or recyclable packaging to reduce unnecessary waste. As part of the Council's Carbon Reduction Plan, vegetarian options were included in the catering. Blue Carrot Catering, located in Petone, is the local external food services supplier that caters to the Wellington Region.*

The snacks were purchased from the Countdown supermarket in Lower Hutt. Countdown is a significant employer in Lower Hutt. Additionally, Pita Pit, an external food services supplier based in Lower Hutt, provided fresh pita sandwiches. The Pita Pit store employs local workers.

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